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TORRINGTON
RURAL DISTRICT
1953.

REPORTS

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND SANITARY SURVEYOR

FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31st DECEMBER, 1953.

GREAT TORRINGTON :
Printed by COPP & Son, "Osborne Printing Works,"
4, Well Street.

STAFF.

PART TIME OFFICERS:

Medical Officer of Health—

DR. E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Clerk—MRS. V. DARCH.

WHOLE TIME OFFICER:

Sanitary Inspector and Building Surveyor—

F. G. GANE, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
TORRINGTON.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Torrington
Rural District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

We have pleasure in presenting our ANNUAL
REPORTS for the year ended 31st December, 1953.

We are, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

Medical Officer of Health.

F. G. GANE, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.,

Sanitary Inspector & Building Surveyor.

Torrington Rural District.

❖ 1953 ❖

General Statistics.

Area (Acres)...	...	...	...	...	...	...	79,825
Population (R.G.)	...	...	...	...	...	...	7,283
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,572
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	£22,299
Sum realised by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	£92 18s. 0d.

Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

Live Births Male 34, Female 23, Total 57.

Increase of 8 on previous year.

Birth Rate per 1000 of estimated Population ... 7·8.

Deaths Male 31, Female 29, Total 60.

Death Rate per 1000 of estimated Resident Population 8·2.

Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health.

General Sanitary Conditions of the District.

Nursing.

The District is provided with midwives and nurses under the National Health Scheme.

Hospitals.

The District is accommodated by the hospitals at Torrington, Bideford, Barnstaple and Exeter which are administered by a local Regional Board.

Clinics.

These work efficiently through the County Council and other authorities.

Isolation Hospitals.

The majority of our patients are received by the Bideford Isolation Hospital. Special facilities are made for smallpox, etc.

Tuberculosis is admirably looked after by the Barnstaple Clinic.

Ambulance Services.

These are very efficiently worked.

Laboratory Services.

These are available and function well, mostly at Exeter.

Maternity Services.

These are provided by Midwives and Hospitals. Baby clinics are very popular. I suggest that normal cases should be encouraged to use the Home Service available as a larger grant is now made for such cases.

Schools.

I understand these are being brought up to date as money is obtained, especially as regards sanitation and water.

School milk is obtained, as far as possible, from T. T. Herds or is pasteurised, but in rural areas this is not always possible. Possibly in the very few schools where such milk is unobtainable, a recognised brand of full cream baby milk would be the best substitute for safety. Any lack of vitamins might be put right in the school dinner until the other is obtainable.

Dairies and Cowsheds.

One case of Tubercular milk has been investigated during the year and appropriate action taken.

Venereal Disease.

There is very little, and what there is, is imported from greater wage earning centres. There is an excellent clinic at Barnstaple.

Infestation.

This is very small amongst locals and the school nurses stop it quickly.

Housing.

There are many houses not up to standard. It is hoped that persons in “decaying houses” shall be put into Council houses. Those dilapidated houses could then be reconditioned before being allowed to be “tenanted” again. Repairs of older houses is a major problem. Possibly more smaller Council houses should be built for the old persons and smaller families.

Mental Health and Deficiencies.

The County looks after this very conscientiously, and also the deaf mutes and blind.

Water.

This is still very poor in quantity and quality, but some villages have got main water and others will do as soon as possible. It is very necessary that new houses should only be built where water is adequate.

Drainage.

This is rather inadequate as a whole, but villages are being provided with main drainage as funds allow.

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

The results are very satisfactory. Immunisation must be kept up to date.

Infectious Diseases.

During the year the following were reported :—

Whooping Cough	19 cases.	Measles	31 cases.
Scarlet Fever	2 „	Dysentery	1 case.
Pneumonia	6 „	Erysipelas	3 cases.
Tuberculosis	2 „	Food Poisoning	1 case.

Annual Report of Sanitary Inspector.

DETAILS OF INSPECTIONS.

Dwellings inspected under Housing Acts	...	...	8
Dwellings inspected under Public Health Acts	...	20	
Re-inspections under Housing Acts	...	...	19
Re-inspections under Public Health Acts	...	...	20
Keeping of Animals	...	...	3
Offensive accumulations	...	...	1
Inquiries into cases of Infectious Disease	...	...	3
Number of rooms disinfected	...	...	3
Visits to Factories	...	...	16
„ „ Bakehouses	...	...	6
„ „ Schools	...	...	6
Food Inspections	...	...	11
Visits to Food Preparing Premises	...	...	26
Number of Water Samples	...	...	23
Building inspections under Bye-laws	...	...	287
Visits to Council Housing Sites	...	...	224
Defective drains	...	...	18
Drains tested	...	...	48
Plans investigated	..	...	71
Petroleum inspections	...	...	12
Dirty houses	...	...	1
Farm Water supplies	...	...	4
Miscellaneous	...	...	23

FACTORIES ACT, 1937 and 1948.

1—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors)

Premises (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of			M/c line No. (7)
			Inspections (4)	Written notices (5)	Occupiers prosecuted (6)	
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities...	1	54	22	—	—	1
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies						
(a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement Order, 1938†) ...	2	—	—	—	—	2
(b) Others ..	3					3
(iii) Other premises under the Act‡ (excluding outworkers' premises) ...	4					4
TOTAL ...		54	22			

2—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	M/c line No.	Number of cases in which defects were found			Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
		Found	Remedied	To H.M. Inspector Referred By H.M. Inspector	

Overcrowding (S.2)	...	...	...	6	...	...	...	6	...
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	...	...	...	7	...	...	...	7	...
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	...	...	...	8	...	...	...	8	...
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	...	...	...	9	...	...	...	9	...
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)	...	...	...	10	...	...	...	10	...
(a) Insufficient...	...	...	...	11	...	...	...	11	...
(b) Unsuitable or defective	...	...	...	12	...	...	...	12	...
(c) Not separate for sexes	...	...	...	13	...	...	...	13	...
Other offences (not including offences relating to Homework)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	...	...	...	...	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

(OUTWORK—Sections 110 and 111).

Nature of Work (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Section 110			Section 111			M/c line No. (9)
		No. of out-workers in August list required by Sect. 110 (1) (c) (3)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council (4)	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists (5)	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises (6)	Notices served (7)	Prosecutions (8)	
Wearing { Making, etc. ... apparel { Cleaning and washing ...	13	67	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	13
	14							14

HOUSING.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :

(1)	(a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	28
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	39
(2)	(a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	8
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	11
(3)		Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	8
(4)		Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	28

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	19
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

A. Proceedings under Sections 17, 18, and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930.

NIL.

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts:—

NIL.

C. Proceedings under Sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930.

NIL.

D. Proceedings under Section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930

NIL.

Improvements carried out and nuisances abated:—

<i>External.</i>					<i>No. of houses.</i>
Walls repaired	...	...	...	...	18
Roofs repaired	...	...	...	...	8
Guttering repaired	...	...	...	...	4
Downspouts repaired	...	...	...	...	4
Chimneys repaired	...	...	...	...	3
Water supply laid on into houses			...	...	14
New pumps provided	...	...	...	...	3
Wells cleansed	...	...	...	...	2
Well steinings repaired		...	...	...	—
New lengths drain laid		...	...	...	28
Defective drains repaired		...	...	...	13
New inspection chambers		...	...	...	12
Septic tanks repaired	...	...	...	...	1
New septic tanks	...	...	...	...	14
New gullies	...	...	...	...	12
New W.C.'s	...	...	...	...	10
Water supply laid on to W.C.'s	...	...	...	...	14
W.C. cisterns renewed	...	...	...	...	4
New washing accommodation	...	...	...	...	1
Outbuildings repaired	...	...	...	...	2
<i>Internal.</i>					
Walls replastered	...	...	...	...	8
Ceilings replastered	...	...	...	...	8
Windows repaired	...	...	...	...	6
Doors repaired	...	...	...	...	5
Floors repaired	...	...	...	...	4
Cooking appliances repaired or renewed	...	...	...	...	6
New sinks	...	...	...	...	3
New sculleries	...	...	...	...	1
Baths installed	...	...	...	...	5
Food storage improved	...	...	...	...	2
Stairs repaired	...	...	...	...	1
Hot water systems fixed	...	...	...	...	8

Only one formal abatement notice was served during the year, and this was complied with without the necessity for taking proceedings.

New Housing Accommodation.

Number of new houses erected by local authority	...	22
„ „ new houses erected by private enterprise	...	11

COUNCIL HOUSING PROGRAMME.

22 houses were completed during the year and at the end of the period under review 26 were under construction. The Council's allo-

cation for 1954 is only 8 traditional houses. Four of these are to be built at Petrockstow and two at Shebbear. One of the greatest difficulties with house building is still the absence of a piped water supply, and unfortunately, many "dug" wells, which seem quite promising when sunk, turn out to be unsatisfactory when there is a period of drought. Water had to be transported to Beaford and Peters Marland sites during the summer because of failure of wells. Future house building ought to be confined to areas where a piped supply is available.

The new smaller non-parlour type house is proving popular with tenants.

CIVIL BUILDING LICENCES.

The issue of licences is carried out by a small Committee of the Council.

Licences issued in respect of repairs, maintenance or miscellaneous building work to housing.

No. of licences issued.	Value in £
1.	650.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The Shebbear scheme was started during the year and at the close of the year was approximately 75% completed. Schemes for Sheepwash and Taddipport were still waiting for Ministry approval, and this has since been given. The Council proposes to submit schemes for St. Giles, Kingscott and Roborough in 1954. The new Winkleigh sewage scheme is operating satisfactorily and samples of the effluent have proved acceptable to the Devon River Board.

WATER SUPPLIES.

During the year mains extensions were commenced to Shebbear and Petrockstow. The total number of premises now connected to the mains is 364. The following new connections were made during the year :—

Domestic - 37.	Trade - 23.	Total - 60.
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RODENT DESTRUCTION.

In conjunction with Torrington Borough Council the Council employs a full time Rodent Operator.

The following work in the Torrington Rural District was carried out during the year :—

Number of Survey calls made...	...	...	...	2127
Number of visits to lay baits on private premises	...	...	...	1632

Number of visits to lay baits on business premises ..	268
Number of visits to lay baits on refuse tips	105
Number of private premises treated	350
Number of business premises treated	58

The total number of bodies found was 837.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

There are no offensive trades in this district.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

The following foods were condemned during the year :--

2 - 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. tins oranges.
 1 - 20 oz. tin grapefruit.
 3 - 29 oz. tins cherries.
 2 - 5 lb. 8 oz. tins solid pack apples.
 1 - 4 lb. tin luncheon meat.
 1 - 6 lb. 12 oz. tin baked beans.
 28 lbs. prunes.
 1 Beast's head.
 8 sets pig's lungs.
 1 pig's liver.
 85 lbs. beef.
 1 lamb.

All condemned food was disposed of by burning. Conditions in the 59 food premises in the district are satisfactory. A small outbreak of food poisoning was quickly traced to infected brawn.

REGISTERED FOOD PREPARATION PREMISES.

No ice-cream is manufactured in the district. 11 licences to sell ice-cream have been issued. In each case factory pre-packed ice-cream is sold. Only 1 licence has been issued for the preparation of sausage and cooked meats.

MILK AND DAIRIES ACTS AND ORDERS.

There are no designated milk bottling establishments in the district, and all retailers are also producers. Milk sampling is, therefore, carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture. 1 distributor's licence was issued.

PETROLEUM LICENCES.

28 petroleum storage licences were issued during the year.

SLAUGHTERING LICENCES.

46 licences were issued during the year.

PLANS.

71 plans were submitted during the year, 67 were approved and 4 disapproved.

All plans are considered by the Council's Planning Committee before submission to the Divisional Planning Committee.

I attended monthly meetings of the Divisional Planning Committee of the Devon County Council.



